Cheshire West
Recycling
Tomorrow **starts today**

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Annual Report 2025-26

Business Plan 2026-30

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Annual Report 2025-26 / Business Plan 2026-30

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Cheshire West Recycling (CWR) is a wholly owned company of Cheshire West and Chester Council, created in 2019 to deliver waste, recycling and fleet services for the borough. Our purpose is to provide safe, efficient services that contribute to a cleaner environment and a stronger, more resilient community.

We operate with cooperative values alongside our Shareholder, our partners and residents to reduce the environmental footprint of waste, whilst supporting the building of sustainable neighbourhoods.

We operate a safety-first culture. We protect and empower our people; nurture a workplace where everyone is included, supported and given the opportunity to develop and thrive.

We use data and insight to guide our decisions and ensure our work has tangible social and environmental benefit. This includes creating secure and permanent local employment, strengthening the borough's economy through local supply chains, and driving the behavioural change needed to meet the climate challenges ahead.

Our Services

CWR delivers key frontline waste, recycling and fleet maintenance services across the borough. At our state-of-the-art materials recovery facility (MRF) in Ellesmere Port, we manage nearly 35,000 tonnes of recycling each year. We also run two waste transfer stations that provide compliant, efficient facilities for the Council's Streetcare teams.

In October 2024, we secured an eight-year contract extension to continue to provide household kerbside collections from March 2026, with the potential for an additional four-year term. We were also awarded the management of the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), running from April 2026 to March 2034, with an option for a two-year extension. Together, these new contracts will increase our operational activity by around 20%.

As CWR continues to grow, we are expanding our commercial waste offer using our borough-wide weekly presence to support a wider range of customers. Building on our successful partnership with Council-owned Brio Leisure, we have introduced food waste collections for schools and Council buildings, helping them meet new legal duties while providing an affordable, low-carbon solution.

Our Fleet Services division maintains both CWR's operational vehicles and key Council-owned fleets, including winter maintenance and integrated transport vehicles. In 2024, this capability was strengthened through the introduction of an electric vehicle maintenance workshop at our Canalside depot, supporting the Council's transition to a cleaner fleet. The award of a new long-term Fleet Maintenance contract beyond March 2026, running alongside our kerbside collection contract, provides the stability needed to plan ahead and invest in future capability.

Towards a resilient and ambitious future

By producing a new five-year business plan, we have an exciting opportunity to look further ahead, shaping the future strategic direction of the company, anticipating emerging challenges, and positioning CWR to make the most of new opportunities. This long-term perspective reinforces our commitment to delivering exceptional value for our Shareholder and the communities that we serve.

Our ambition is not only to maintain our position as a trusted, high-performing service provider, but to raise the bar for excellence across the sector, demonstrating leadership in service quality, operational resilience, sustainability and social impact.

With clear strategic priorities, robust financial planning and carefully targeted investment, CWR is well placed to build sustainable growth, drive innovation, enhance service delivery and generate lasting environmental and social benefits.

CWR maintains a strong governance framework that ensures accountability, transparency and alignment with our Shareholder's priorities.

Our Independent Non-Executive Chair, Frank Rogers, leads the Board in fulfilling its legal, regulatory and shareholder responsibilities as set out in the Member Agreement. Under his leadership, the Board provides strategic guidance, oversees organisational performance and supports sound decision-making.

The Board of Directors is made up of:

Frank Rogers	Independent Non-Executive Chair
James Cowell	Non-Executive Director (Resident)
Chris Smith	Non-Executive Director
Mark Rutter	Employee Non-Executive Director
Rebecca Oldham	Employee Non-Executive Director
Andy Edwards	Executive Director
Jody Sherratt	Executive Director
Councillor Karen Shore	Shareholder Observer
Council Officers	Shareholder Observer(s)

Chair of the Board Statement

I am pleased to introduce CWR's 2026–2030 five-year Business Plan and 2025-26 Annual Report, which together set out our long-term strategic direction and our continued commitment to delivering high quality waste and recycling services for the borough.

This year represents a pivotal moment for CWR. The award of long-term contracts for kerbside collections and fleet maintenance, and the addition of the HWRC management provides a strong, stable foundation on which to plan confidently for the future. These commitments not only secure the sustainability of our core services but also create conditions for strategic growth, service innovation and enhanced financial resilience.

Looking ahead, our focus over the next five years will be firmly on delivering smarter, greener and more efficient services. We will continue to invest in sustainable technologies, including electric fleet capability, and expand initiatives such as food waste collections to support the borough's climate ambitions. Alongside this, we will grow our commercial operations to strengthen our financial position and maximise the value we deliver to the community.

Our people remain central to our success. By nurturing a culture of inclusion, development and innovation, we are building an organisation where colleagues feel valued, supported and inspired to contribute to our vision.

As we begin this next phase of CWR's journey, I extend my sincere thanks to our teams, partners and stakeholders for their ongoing commitment. Together, we will continue to build a cleaner, greener and more sustainable future for the borough.

Frank Rogers

Independent Non-Executive Chair

Employee Director Statements

At CWR, we remain committed to strengthening employee voices and fostering a positive, inclusive workplace where colleagues feel informed, supported and able to influence how the organisation develops. Over the past year, the Employee Focus Group has continued to provide valuable frontline insight, guiding improvements in wellbeing, communication and day-to-day service delivery.

As Employee Directors, we have taken a more active role in strategic discussions, presenting papers, contributing to policy development and ensuring operational experience informs Board decision-making. This has helped to strengthen the connection between the Board and the workforce.

As we prepare for a significant year of operational change, including the new management of the borough's HWRCs, we remain focused on supporting colleagues through the change and championing development opportunities across the organisation. We are proud to represent the workforce at Board level and will continue to help shape a workplace where everyone can contribute and thrive.

Rebecca Oldham & Mark Rutter

Employee Directors

Managing Director Statement

Since its formation in 2019, CWR has grown into a trusted provider of waste, recycling and fleet services for Cheshire West and Chester. As I take on the role of Managing Director, I do so recognising the strong foundations already in place. Having been part of the organisation since its inception, I have seen first-hand the commitment of our workforce, the support from the council and the strength of the partnerships that have helped shape the organisation we are today.

A focus on safety, data-driven decision making and social value delivered through our day-to-day activities has become part of CWR's DNA, shaping how we deliver services, support our workforce and continuously improve operational performance.

The award of long-term contracts for kerbside collections and the management of HWRCs reflects how far the organisation has developed in a relatively short period of time and provides a strong platform for the next chapter of CWR's growth and development.

Our teams have been central to that progress and will remain key as we continue to build on the strong platform already in place.

Jody Sherratt

Managing Director

Our Service Performance

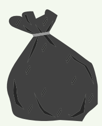
(April 2025 - March 2026)

TOTAL NUMBER OF COLLECTIONS UNDERTAKEN

24,395,653

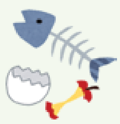
The following figures are in %	2024/25	2025/26
Right first time collections	99.96	99.97
Missed collections rectified within target	99.81	99.92
Right first time bulky collections	99.98	100
Containers delivered within target	99.67	99.98

Materials Collected 2025/26 (Tonnes)



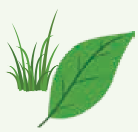
Domestic Waste

57,197



Food Waste

9,409



Garden Waste

22,352

Fibre Waste

13,097

Container Waste

17,194

A Year in Review

During 2025/26, CWR demonstrated robust operational performance and maintained close alignment with Cheshire West and Chester Council's objectives.

The RAG-rated assessment below outlines our progress against last year's key operational objectives.

Target	Outcome	Rating
HSEQ		
Integrate HWRC sites into the CWR HSEQ management framework, ensuring all sites meet all standards and are on track for ISO and CMS Certifications.	A structured integration plan is being delivered, permit applications have been submitted, and key onboarding and compliance requirements completed. Updated safe working procedures and risk assessments are being finalised as part of the revised HSEQ management system, with internal audit and gap analysis arrangements being put in place to support ISO and CMS certification within six months of Go Live.	✓
Reduce reversing-related incidents and H&S risk through enhanced safety monitoring and supervision.	A full reversing safety campaign and training package has been implemented; supported by enhanced in-person and remote monitoring. This has delivered a 44% reduction in reversing-related incidents against the baseline, exceeding the 25% target set.	✓
Monitor and maintain management systems to ensure compliance with all environmental regulatory requirements.	Environmental management systems have been further enhanced, including the introduction of a legislative change alert system. Improvement actions identified through the annual CMS review have been completed, with new HSEQ ICT systems implemented to support ongoing compliance and incident reduction.	✓
Collaborate with local communities, partner agencies and stakeholders to raise awareness and promote positive changes in road safety and fire risk reduction, enhancing operational safety.	Joint working with partner agencies continues, including allowing the Fire Service to use CWR facilities for training exercises. Preparatory work is underway for wider community and road safety initiatives with key stakeholders. Staff training and communications are reinforcing reporting expectations, with early indicators suggesting increased reporting of incidents involving members of the public.	✓

Target	Outcome	Rating
HSEQ		
Drive continual improvement and sector engagement through benchmarking operations and waste handling.	Ongoing engagement with sector peers is supporting benchmarking of operations and waste handling against WISH and industry best practice. Benchmarking exercises are underway, with improvement actions being identified and progressed as part of continuous improvement activity.	✓
Fully implement AI sampling to meet new Environment Agency MRF sampling regulations, ensuring compliance is achieved in an efficient and safe manner compared to traditional manual processes.	The process is ongoing with continued dialogue between CWR, Greyparrot and the Environment Agency to implement a safer, compliant and efficient alternative to traditional manual sampling methods.	–

OPERATIONS		
Maintain and enhance the delivery of consistently high-quality waste and fleet services.	Service performance has improved with a 99.97% right first-time collection rate achieved and all breeches rectified within tolerance. MOT first-time pass rates and winter equipment availability have also improved compared to the previous year.	✓
Incremental improvements to the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF).	AI technology is fully embedded within the MRF, with early performance indicators suggesting improvements in sorting accuracy and efficiency likely to exceed 15%. Automation options appraisal is ongoing; key staff have been trained, and performance dashboards are now in place with contamination and recovery benchmarking underway.	✓
Optimise operational efficiency and compliance for Fleet Services.	Fleet Services and operational delivery are more closely integrated, enabling improved identification of inefficiencies and compliance risks, e.g. analysis of tyre damage linked to individual crews is being used to target enhanced training and reduce avoidable vehicle downtime. Maintenance arrangements continue to be strengthened, with EV capability expansion being further explored through additional tools and training.	✓

Target	Outcome	Rating
PEOPLE		
Implement an inclusive reward and recognition incentive scheme ensuring all employees have equal opportunities to share in the company's success.	CWR is presently reviewing its pay and reward mechanism in line with legislative changes and the up-coming TUPE transfer of HWRC site management contract employees.	
Develop a staff engagement network to facilitate employee input into company development and decision-making.	An Employee Focus Group has been established, facilitated by the Employee Directors with representatives from all service areas of CWR. The group has engaged with – and has provided valuable insight into – the People and Wellbeing Strategy, improving communication channels and operational feedback loops.	
Increase workforce retention rate by 10% through career development, recognition and enhanced work-life balance initiatives.	Employee retention increased by 12.6% through rewarding and equitable working conditions, strengthened induction and training for frontline staff – including graduated starts, buddying and regular check-ins – alongside greater performance and long service recognition, and the proactive management of annual leave to support healthier work life balances.	
Work towards a more equitable workforce and address deeper systemic barriers, which limit alignment with the company's culture and values.	Enhanced communication between the Board and frontline staff, driven by the Employee Focus Group. Commenced roll out of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training and Sexual Harassment training to promote awareness and understanding of its alignment with CWR's values. Training to be cascaded down to operational level during phase two in 2026/27.	
Strengthen the company's social value contributions through inclusive recruitment strategies and community engagement initiatives.	Facilitated employment gateways for Supported Internships and Care Leavers in partnership with the Council; delivered recruitment advice and promoted opportunities at job fairs in partnership with DWP; provided clear employment pathways for Armed Forces community, including guaranteed interviews, reservist support and CV workshops for Sea Cadets.	

Target	Outcome	Rating
FINANCIAL AND COMMERCIAL		
Embed social value into procurement processes.	CWR-led procurements now include 10% Social Value Score.	✓
Increased level of data governance.	External Expert Agency appointed as Data Protection Officer. Data Oversight Group created by extensively training 2 existing employees. All overhead staff completed Data Governance awareness training.	✓
Increase local supplier usage.	Local supplier spend increased to 72%, however this was short of the 75% target.	–
Maximise volume & value of recyclates by improving input quality & producing high quality outputs whilst minimising MRF downtime.	Prices exceeded published indices after broker fees. No unprocessed material sent out. Work ongoing to benchmark quality through use of AI.	✓
Robust financial understanding & predictability of outcomes.	Full year forecast updated monthly, Risks & Opportunities updated quarterly and presented to the CWR Board. Quarterly formal Shareholder meetings in place and regular informal dialogue.	✓
Increased financial awareness & resilience.	Work ongoing, with some Operations dashboards now expanded into Financials. Some devolved budget responsibility in place with workflow approvals management system.	–
Agreement of HWRC service funding & related budget.	Extensive work has taken place to date with the Shareholder to agree a budget, particularly given significant shifts in the HWRC materials market.	–
CHANGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
Improve the Business Support team's efficiency, enhancing flexibility, skill sets and team resilience.	Built a more resilient Business Support team by broadening skills coverage, reducing single-point dependencies, streamlining workflows, and introducing automation. Continuous improvement practices are now embedded as business as usual.	✓

Target	Outcome	Rating
CHANGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE		
Strengthen CWR's ICT systems and infrastructure to support planned organisational growth and agility.	Strengthened ICT systems and governance to support organisational growth, resilience and digital maturity. Data governance and cyber security gaps were addressed, scalable systems were introduced to support HWRC operations, and digital governance was enhanced including the adoption of AI policies.	✓
Expand CWR's commercial food waste collection service to help educational facilities to comply with UK planned changed legislation by April 2025.	Established and expanded a compliant commercial food waste collection service across Council buildings and educational facilities in line with new UK legislation. Service packs were introduced to support participation, with collections integrated into existing rounds to ensure cost efficiency and minimise environmental impact.	✓
Deliver programmed service change projects in partnership with the Council and provide strategic advice and modelling for future changes.	Delivered a programme of service changes with the Council, driving operational improvement and supporting longer-term planning in alignment with the Council's wider strategic objectives. Key initiatives included: assisted services review, chargeable containers and narrow access service implementation. Data-led analysis informed service design.	✓
Tackle contamination and improve material quality.	Established a robust, data-led contamination management framework, including borough-wide rollout of contamination tagging, targeted communications, and embedded business-as-usual processes, providing a strong platform for improved material quality and recycling performance.	–
Provide project management for the HWRC mobilisation phase and ensure robust governance is in place.	HWRC mobilisation was managed through a structured, phased approach with robust governance established. Cost modelling, procurement, systems implementation and workforce transition completed effectively to ensure operational readiness and stable service delivery.	✓

Advancing our AI Journey at CWR

Innovation is a core value at CWR and underpins our approach to improving efficiency, safety and service delivery. Over the past year, Artificial Intelligence has moved from concept to embedded operational practice, demonstrating how our innovation is focused on practical outcomes rather than technology for its own sake.

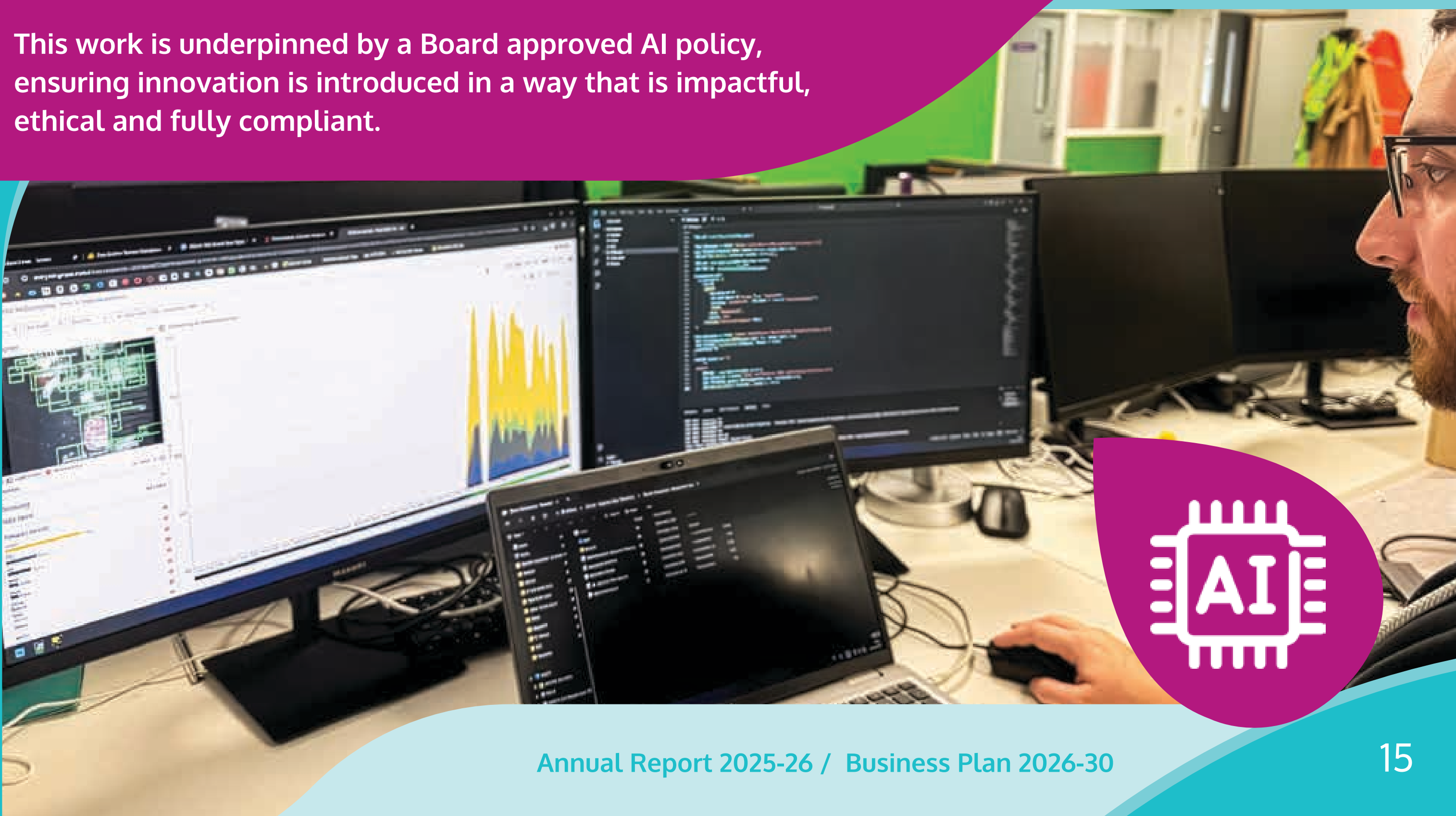
AI is now fully integrated within the MRF, driven through dashboards which is providing real time insight into material composition, contamination trends and line performance. This has strengthened decision-making, improved operational efficiency and supported safer ways of working. Early performance indicators suggest improvements in sorting accuracy and efficiency are likely to exceed initial expectations, with ongoing benchmarking in place.

Our strategic partnership with Greyparrot has continued to deliver tangible benefits, including improved understanding of material quality, more targeted responses to contamination and stronger evidence to support operational planning, investment decisions and resident engagement.

Looking ahead, CWR's long term business plan places AI at the centre of our drive for efficiency and service optimisation. Central to this is the use of AI as a collaborative tool, or 'cobot'. Rather than replacing roles, AI supports people to develop, build confidence and progress within the organisation, aligning with CWR's One of Our Own programme. AI will increasingly be used to undertake routine and repetitive activities, improving consistency while freeing people to focus on higher value work.

Building on our leadership in applying AI within the MRF, CWR is now exploring how a similar approach can be taken across wider operational areas, including Health, Safety, Environment and Quality (HSEQ). This includes the potential use of AI enabled safety controls, such as automatically pausing rear lifting equipment or preventing vehicle reversing where a person is detected to further strengthen existing control measures.

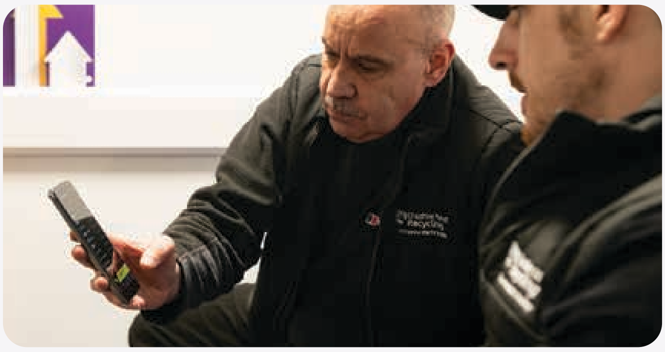
This work is underpinned by a Board approved AI policy, ensuring innovation is introduced in a way that is impactful, ethical and fully compliant.



Innovative

Digital transformation of workforce time management:

Digital time and attendance technology has replaced manual processes with accurate, real-time workforce data across CWR sites. This innovation has improved payroll transparency, strengthened compliance with working time regulations, increased visibility of workforce presence at depots to support health and safety oversight, and enabled more effective attendance and resource management.



Safe

Continued ISO accreditation success:

CWR maintains its ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 certifications following an ISOQAR audit that praised the organisation's strong systems, engaged teams and robust safety and compliance practices, reinforcing our commitment to quality, responsibility and operational excellence.

Trusted

Shining achievements:

CWR's ongoing commitment to supporting ex-services personnel into employment and creating meaningful opportunities for veterans and reservists through the Armed Forces Covenant has earned the organisation a Gold Award in the Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS).

Responsible

Long-term Fleet Maintenance contract award:

Long-term Fleet Maintenance services for Council vehicles to extend beyond March 2026 until at least 2034, ensuring the continued operation, safety and reliability of vehicles that support essential community services across the borough.

Innovative

AI-driven operational achievement:

The deployment of AI-enabled performance monitoring in our MRF has successfully enhanced daily operational visibility, providing clearer insight into productivity, material volumes, non-target materials and downtime. This innovation has strengthened shift-level control, day-to-day performance management and maintenance planning, driving more efficient plant operations.

Safe

National recognition:

Winner of the 2025 'Health & Safety Award for Excellence' for its innovative "Rolling Away from Risk" mandate and the installation of defibrillators across all CWR frontline vehicles. These initiatives have received national recognition for reducing operational risk and enhancing safety for both colleagues and the public.

Trusted

Disability Confident status achieved:

Level 1 Disability Confident status awarded, recognising CWR's commitment to being a fair, inclusive and responsible employer through strengthened recruitment practices and workplace support for colleagues with disabilities and long-term health conditions.

Responsible

Enhanced social value outcomes:

Enhanced outcomes achieved by embedding social value across the organisation and expanding pathways into employment and skills development via CWR's Care Leavers Programme, Supported Internship Programme and Apprenticeships Programme for local young people.

Overall Financial Performance

Year 2025/26	Actual	Budget	Variance
Income	18,480	18,096	383
Cost	18,172	18,011	162
Depreciation	86	86	0
Surplus/Deficit	222	0	222

Key areas of focus

Materials recycling facility MRF:

AI-enabled data analysis is being used to monitor material inputs and outputs at the MRF, with ongoing work to maximise recyclable value through efficient deployment of manual picking staff and targeted plant adjustments. A strengthened cleaning and maintenance programme has been introduced to minimise unplanned downtime and ensure all material is processed on site.

Recent national changes to Environment Agency permit requirements will require wider investment across the Canalside MRF facility and work is underway with the Council to finalise EPR funded investment, providing a clear route to compliance with Simpler Recycling.

Materials income:

Prices were strong in the first three quarters of the financial year, generating a favourable variance of approximately £330K against budget. Our expert broker partner continues to deliver measurable value, helping to optimise this important income stream.

Vehicle maintenance:

As the Fleet continues to age and exit its warranty period, vehicle maintenance cost inevitably increases. To date, we have been able to absorb this burden (£40K in 25/26) through efficiencies; however, this is becoming increasingly difficult. Estimates put upcoming year-on-year increase at £100K.

Overhead vacancy & absence periods:

Within the year, a number of key roles were vacant or absent for periods of time. Whilst this led to a financial saving of £49K, it has led to significant pressure and burden on other members of the team, who have endeavoured to ensure essential tasks are completed.

Plan Deliver Review:

Our Plan Deliver Review process continues to ensure high performance standards while maximising productivity. This structured approach has delivered against the budget stretch targets of 2% Overtime and 4.5% Absence.

Supporting Council cost pressures:

£81K of the savings generated from the above have been used to support the April 2025 pay award. And a further £153k of funding has been returned relating to cost pressures from the closure of a refuse delivery point.

Cash management:

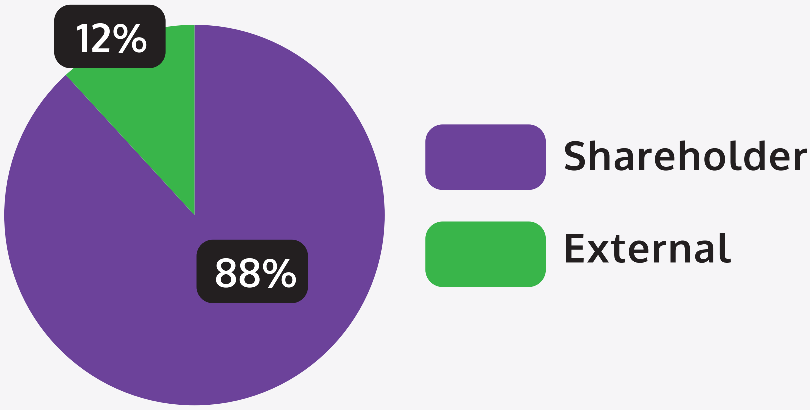
Effective cash management and surplus generation has resulted in Bank Interest of £35K for CWR (budget £35K). We have maintained our loan-free status since March 2023.

Income Analysis

Shareholder Vs External:

The majority of CWR's income comes from our Shareholder as opposed to external sources as shown below:

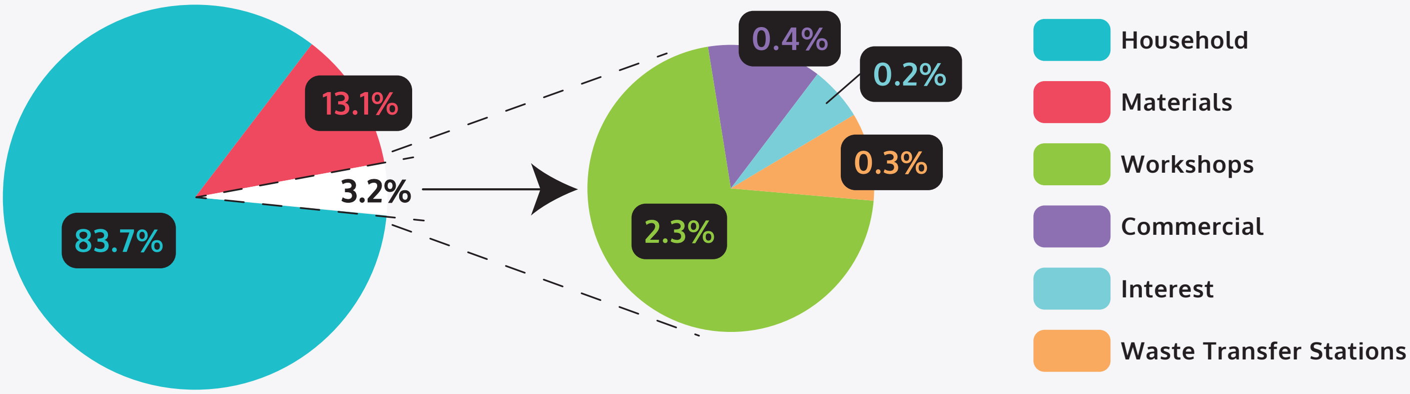
Shareholder Vs External Income:



Income Streams:

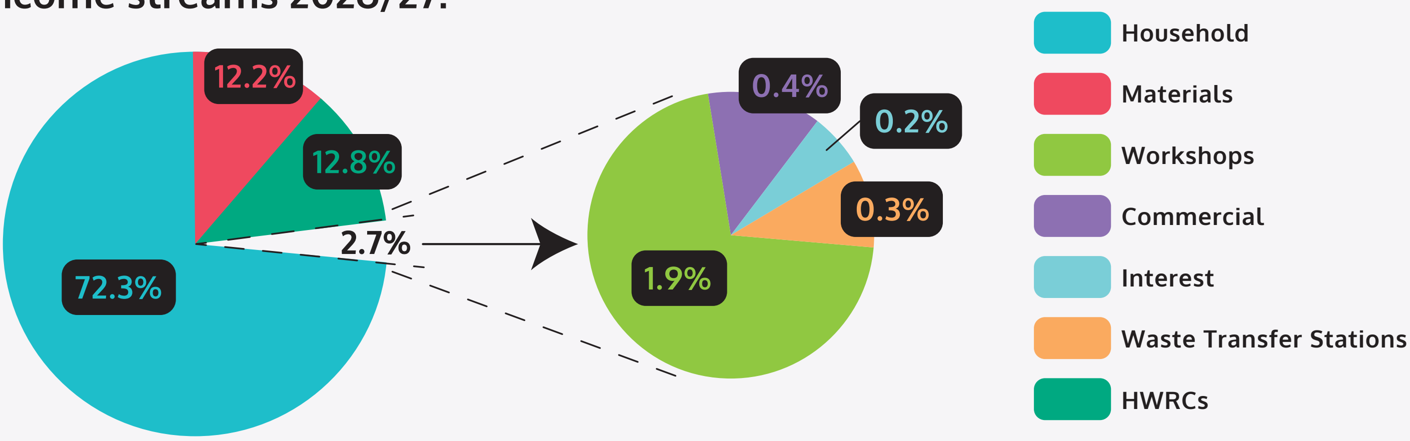
The majority of CWR's income is from its household collections service, with income generated from the sale of Recyclable Materials being the 2nd largest stream.

Income streams 2025/26:



With the introduction of the HWRC service from April 2026, this is projected to become CWR's 2nd largest income stream:

Income streams 2026/27:



Materials Income Analysis

Shareholder Vs External:

The volatility of the market for the sale of Recyclable Materials makes this a key area of focus for CWR. As the left side of the table below shows, prices have been generally good in the financial year. However, the right side demonstrates the volatility and inherent risk associated.

		PRICE 2025/26 FINANCIAL YEAR					PRICE SINCE APRIL 2020 (£s)		
	Material	Budget	High	Ave	Low	Trend	High	Low	Trend
RED BIN	Plastic	105	101	87	70		524	20	
RED BIN	Glass	20	41	36	33		80	16	
RED BIN	Steel	120	140	114	101		300	78	
RED BIN	Aluminium	1,000	1,461	1,289	1,169		1,664	769	
OTHER	Fibre Mix	45	73	61	45		128	15	
OTHER	Food	8	7	6	4		35	-3	

Supporting the Council Fleet

CWR support the maintenance of key Council fleet such as buses and gritters.

This is charged on the basis of:

Fixed costs –
covering planned maintenance / servicing and MOTs.

Standby –
to provide 24/7 on call cover for emergency breakdowns from our Expert Vehicle Technicians.

Variable costs –
including any issues identified from planned maintenance and damage. Parts are charged on a passthrough basis to enable the Council to benefit from our reduced rates.

£K	Fixed	Variable	Total
Labour	140	104	244
Standby	23	-	23
Parts & MOT	48	121	169
	211	225	436

2026/2027 Budget

	2026/27 Budget	2025/2026 Actual
Household Collections	15,908	15,349
HWRCs	2,750	Nil
Materials	2,685	2,539
Fleet Maintenance	420	419
Commercial	85	78
Waste Transfer Station	60	60
Interest	35	35
Total Income	**21,943**	**18,480**
Staff Related	13,815	11,707
Fleet	1,763	1,551
Fuel	1,459	1,268
Materials Disposal	1,710	900
Other	3,110	2,746
Depreciation	86	86
Total Cost	**21,943**	**18,258**
Surplus/(Deficit)	NIL	222

Figures in £000s

Key assumptions

- The MRF operates within planned downtime assumptions and the quality of household recycling meets anticipated input specifications.
- Overtime and absence levels are maintained at 2% and 4.5%, respectively.

Focus on HWRCs

The implementation of the HWRCs brings opportunities and has significant synergies with the current CWR business model, particularly in absorbing back office and management functionality into CWR's existing overhead.

However, it also brings additional risk, particularly in relation to materials income and disposal costs.

Some materials such as paper and card can be bulked at CWR's existing transfer stations and hauled using existing methods to current outlets. Other materials such as glass and garden waste can be hauled directly to current or new outlets via the new HWRC hook loader fleet. These materials add to the current inherent level of risk, by increasing the volume of existing streams.

However, other materials such as ferrous and non-ferrous metals, textiles, wood and WEEE are new streams and therefore bring a significantly higher level of risk. Due to the nature of haulage required for these streams, CWR will be reliant on relatively local markets, which further increases the risk. The current state of the wood, ferrous metal and textiles markets in particular, present issues:

WOOD	FERROUS METAL	TEXTILES
In recent years, legislation changes leading to tighter classification testing and regulatory requirements have increased suppliers' charges, which are ultimately passed on. The year 2025, in particular, has been extremely challenging for the wood market and this looks likely to continue in 2026. There is such a backlog of stockpiled wood waste in the UK system that the Environment Agency has allowed stockpiling above standard limits. Prices have recently worsened by £15-£25 per tonne, which represents an annual cost of £120-£200K per annum.	Whilst CWR is currently receiving high prices for its MRF-sorted steel product collected from households, the HWRC ferrous metal market is lower than the 5-year average. This is due to the inherent lower quality and mixed nature of the material along with a general market decline, which is likely to be cyclical in nature. The current forecasted price is around £30 per tonne lower than the 5-year average, which is the equivalent of around £60K per annum.	For the past 10 years, the textiles market has been in steady decline. The saturation of low-quality fast fashion in donation streams – along with export markets that once buoyed UK textile values – softened due to shifts in demand and rising duties. The use of elastane in clothing also creates added complexities in the recycling process. All of this has reduced prices from over £200 per tonne to around £15 per tonne. There is no sign of this trend reversing or even slowing in the near to medium term and every £25 per tonne reduction costs approximately £15K per year.

Property growth in the Borough

When CWR took over operation of the collection service in March 2020, the service covered around 163,000 properties at an annual cost of £15 million, equivalent to £92 per property.

Since then, a further 9,109 properties have been added to the collection service. This growth has been absorbed through incremental improvements in operational productivity. This has avoided an estimated £839K of additional service cost over the period, or around £168K per year when averaged over five years.

The service is now close to its optimised capacity. Housing growth is increasingly in larger, concentrated developments, which reduces the ability to spread additional demand across collection rounds and limits the scope to absorb further growth without additional vehicles or staff. However, CWR will continue to work with the Council to find ways of absorbing future housing growth into current resources, as far as possible.

HEALTH, SAFETY, ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY

Health, safety, environment and quality are fundamental to the delivery of the Business Plan and are embedded through CWR's HSEQ Management System, including our Competency Management System (CMS). CMS provides the formal framework through which we assure legal and technical competence for permitted operations, in alignment with ISO 14001, ISO 45001 and ISO 9001 requirements and the Environment Agency's operator competence expectations.

During 2024/25 we recorded an increase in RIDDOR reportable incidents and Lost Time Injuries. This increase arose from a short period of severe snow and ice in January 2025, when frontline collection services were maintained under challenging conditions.

In accordance with CMS and ISO requirements for incident investigation, corrective action and management review, a full evaluation of our Severe Weather Plan was undertaken, informed by direct engagement with frontline staff. This resulted in strengthened winter-working controls and the introduction of snow grip footwear for collection crews, which have now been embedded within CMS procedures and operational controls.

These measures were first deployed in January 2026 during which similar icy conditions were faced as the previous year. This new approach resulted in zero RIDDOR reportable incidents and zero Lost Time Injuries, demonstrating effective learning, implementation and verification in line with continual improvement principles.

Through the Business Plan period, CMS will continue to provide assurance that competence, compliance and safety are systematically managed, monitored and reviewed, ensuring that HSEQ remains fully integrated into operational delivery and decision making.

2025/26 HSEQ Performance	RIDDORS	Number of Lost Time Incidents (LTI)	Total Number of Incidents (NLT+LTI)
2024/25	7	13	43
2025/26	3	4	39

Highlights of our key HSEQ achievements in 2025/26:

ISO Certification Extension:

- Successfully extended ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 45001 certifications to include Fleet Services, reflecting our commitment to ensuring all aspects of the business operate under robust management systems, with no non-conformances identified.

Extensive HSEQ Training and Engagement:

- Delivered a comprehensive training programme tailored to the new MRF at Canalside, ensuring operational readiness and compliance.
- Designed and rolled out bespoke environmental and health and safety compliance training for Fleet Services.
- Launched proactive safety campaigns and completed a full refresher training programme for all operational crews, reinforcing core HSEQ values and safe working practices.
- Introduced a new HSEQ ICT and training platform to enhance reporting, competence tracking and training delivery.

Fire Incident Mitigation Improvements:

- Completed a comprehensive review of Fire Prevention Plans and fire procedures to strengthen risk management and emergency preparedness.
- Worked collaboratively with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to refine fire safety strategies.
- Delivered targeted awareness training focused on contamination risks within waste streams, including the hazards associated with lithium-ion batteries.

Driving Capability and Operational Assurance

During 2025/26, CWR's Fleet Services division has continued to strengthen its role as a core enabler of safe, compliant and efficient operations for both CWR and Council fleet activity. The focus has been on building capability, improving assurance and preparing the service for future operational and contractual demands.

Fleet Services has continued to align with the Council's fleet strategy, particularly in preparing for the increasing use of electric vehicles through investment in skills, accreditation and dedicated workshop infrastructure. Alongside this, stronger governance and reporting arrangements have been embedded to improve Commissioner and Shareholder visibility of fleet performance and compliance.

Key achievements during the year include:

- Strengthening transport management capability through the completion of our staff Transport Manager CPC, with further CPC training underway.
- Clear progression through the apprenticeship programme, with an existing apprentice successfully completing year one and moving into year two, and a new first year apprentice commencing and performing well.
- All workshop technicians now IRTEC accredited, providing independent assurance of competence in commercial vehicle maintenance and repair.
- Delivery of EV training across the Fleet team and commissioning of a fully operational EV workshop bay.
- Successful completion of external audits and insurance assessments, with no material issues identified.
- Introduction of improved fleet dashboards and compliance reporting, now embedded within regular contract meetings with the Council.

Operationally, Fleet Services has expanded its support across Council and CWR fleets, including seasonal maintenance programmes, new maintenance arrangements for specialist vehicles and increased fixed price maintenance coverage. These changes improve resilience, reduce downtime and support cost effective fleet operation.

Looking ahead, Fleet Services will continue to evolve to support increased demands arising from the HWRC contract and wider infrastructure assets, ensuring the function remains resilient, skilled and closely aligned to operational needs.

Fleet Services

Laying the Foundations for HWRC Service Success

In October 2024, CWR was awarded the contract to manage the borough's Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) from April 2026. This is a major step for the business, growing our operations and supporting the Council's aim to deliver a more joined up, efficient and resident-focused service.

Mobilisation has been delivered through a phased and well-planned programme, managed in close partnership with the Council. The approach has been open and collaborative, with joint working and shared oversight throughout.

Key progress includes:

- Completion of TUPE consultation and onboarding planning for incoming staff
- Procurement of essential equipment, systems and uniform
- Transfer of key operational permits
- Development of site-specific Safe Working Procedures and operational standards
- Implementation of new ICT systems to support compliance, performance and permit management

With mobilisation nearing completion, the focus is now on ensuring Day One readiness and full integration into CWR's wider operations. From April 2026, we will manage seven sites across the borough, supporting over 800,000 visits each year. The service will operate in line with new Council policies, including pre-registration and DIY charging, designed to reduce waste, increase recycling and deliver agreed savings.

Our immediate focus will be on delivering a safe, consistent and high-quality experience for residents, while supporting a positive working environment for HWRC staff. This includes improving on-site welfare facilities, providing consistent uniform and equipment, and ensuring staff are fully supported through clear roles, regular communication and strong local leadership.

We will apply CWR's established ways of working across the HWRC service. This includes our Plan Deliver Review approach and the use of real-time data to inform decision-making, track performance and respond to resident feedback. The service will also benefit from greater flexibility, with the ability to deploy staff and resources across services in a way that supports resilience and improves efficiency.

The integration of HWRCs into our operating model also creates new opportunities to expand the social value we deliver. With a broader footprint and more direct engagement with residents, we will have greater scope to grow existing initiatives, including support for care leavers, local employment pathways and community partnerships, and embed them more fully into day-to-day operations.

From 2027/28, we will also begin a significant expansion of our reuse activity. This will include the development of a new integrated model that brings together the HWRC and bulky waste collection services. By combining these offers, we aim to recover more materials, reduce waste and increase access to low-cost, good quality household items, delivering environmental, social and financial value for local communities.

This work has laid the foundations for a safe and stable service start in April 2026. With mobilisation nearing completion, strong joint working in place, and a clear focus on quality, CWR is ready to take on the long-term management of the HWRC network and ensure it becomes a valued and fully integrated part of our wider service to residents.

OUR SOCIAL VALUE

Delivering social value is integral to how CWR operates as a Council-owned company. Beyond providing essential waste, recycling and fleet services, CWR remains committed to maximising the positive social, economic and environmental outcomes generated through its activities, supporting the delivery of the Borough Plan and wider Council priorities.

Across the organisation, social value is embedded into day-to-day decision-making, including employment practices, service design and supply chain management. CWR supports local employment by providing secure jobs, training and progression opportunities, with 92.6% of the workforce living within the borough and 109 people supported into employment through targeted programmes over the past year. This focus on stability, inclusion and skills development strengthens service resilience while enabling individuals to build sustainable careers.

CWR also contributes to a fairer local economy by working closely with local suppliers and small businesses, helping to retain economic value within Cheshire West and Chester. In 2025/26, 72% of supplier spend was directed to businesses within a 30-mile radius, supporting local jobs, skills and economic activity; and 76% of supplier spend has been with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.

Environmental responsibility remains an important component of this approach. Through responsible operational practices, efficiency improvements and careful resource management, CWR minimises environmental impact while supporting the Council's wider sustainability ambitions.

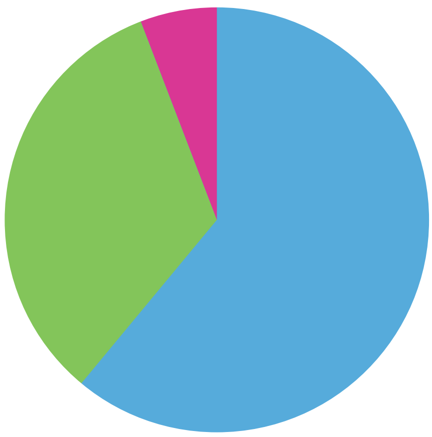
Social value performance is supported by structured measurement and reporting through the framework, Thrive, enabling CWR to understand impact, demonstrate value and identify opportunities for improvement. As long-term contracts for household collections, fleet maintenance and HWRC management commence, this embedded approach will provide a solid platform for scaling social value delivery in line with the Council's strategic objectives.

thrive

Thrive is an independent social reporting framework that supports CWR to identify, measure, and quantify the social and environmental impacts of its activities.

Since establishment in March 2020, we are proud to have created a cumulative social value total of £124M.

- Fighting Climate Change **£42.5M**
- Wellbeing and Equal Opportunity **£6.5M**
- Tackling Economic Inequality **£75M**



In the calendar year 2025 we increased this figure by £25M.
(£7.8M intrinsic and £17.2M added value)

For more information, visit: thrive-platform.com

2025 Highlights

Total Social Value Delivered in 2025: £25M

Recycled tonnes: **62,035**

312 employees from within the borough, over **92.6%** of the workforce

£2.1 Million spent with companies within 30 miles of the borough

£2.5 Million spent with companies within the borough

6 loaders upskilled to drivers

275 hours of community engagement on environmental issues

43 new full time employees from unemployment

9 onboarded employees previously classified as NEET

£2.6 Million spent with suppliers classified as SMEs

1,183 metric tonne reduction in Carbon Dioxide Equivalent

5,925 items donated to local food banks

2 new apprentice opportunities created

11 veterans employed

159.5 hours spent on community activities to raise environmental awareness

1,636 hours of learning and development delivered to staff

Gold Award in the 'Defence Employer Recognition Scheme'

OUR SOCIAL VALUE IN PRACTICE

In a context of increasingly stretched public funding, CWR's approach to social value is focused on how services are delivered day to day, rather than on additional or standalone initiatives.

By making deliberate operational choices, we seek to redirect existing expenditure towards outcomes that deliver long term social, economic and community benefit.

This approach utilises CWR resources to enable opportunities; supporting people into sustainable work, reducing reliance on agency labour, and strengthening local supply chains.

The case studies that follow demonstrate how social value is being delivered through core CWR operations, including through our Care Leavers programme, Armed Forces Covenant commitments, reduction in agency use, and an increased use of local suppliers.

1

From Care to Career

CASE STUDY

Supporting care leavers into sustainable employment

In spring 2025, CWR launched its Care Leavers Programme, developed in direct alignment with Cheshire West and Chester Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy to support care-experienced young people into meaningful employment. Delivered in partnership with the Council's Young People's Service and social workers, the programme provides structured opportunities that help care leavers build confidence, resilience and skills for long-term success.

The programme offers paid employment within CWR's frontline waste and recycling services, enabling participants to gain practical experience while contributing to the delivery of essential local services. Roles are designed to provide structure, routine and progression, supported by on-the-job training, mentoring and access to wellbeing and employee support services.

Whilst still in its infancy, the impact of the programme is already evident. Its first participant, Connor, has shared: ***"I began working in the yard and have since moved into a Loader role, which I really love. The team is great – and I feel really supported."***

A subsequent participant, Daniel, has added: ***"It's a really positive environment and I love the work. The training has been excellent and I've built great relationships with the team. I know I can speak up if something's worrying me, and I've felt comfortable here from day one. After just two months, I already feel settled, and I can see myself staying here for years."***

Through the Care Leavers Programme, CWR is delivering tangible social value by supporting vulnerable young people, creating local employment opportunities and developing skills that support long-term independence. The programme aligns with the Borough's Six Missions, particularly those focused on improving life chances, enabling inclusive economic growth and building stronger, more resilient communities.

This programme complements CWR's Supported Internship Programme, also launched in 2025, which supports young people with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities into the workplace. While distinct, both initiatives demonstrate how CWR works alongside the Council to deliver meaningful, equitable employment outcomes for people from protected characteristic groups.

2

From Service to Career

CASE STUDY

Supporting veterans into employment

CWR signed the Armed Forces Covenant in 2023, pledging to support members of the Armed Forces community, including veterans, reservists and their families into sustainable employment. This commitment has been quickly embedded across the organisation, with CWR progressing through the Employer Recognition Scheme from Bronze to Silver Awards and subsequently Gold in just two and a half years.

In 2025 alone, 10 veterans joined CWR, moving into roles across the organisation's operations. These appointments have strengthened service delivery by bringing skills developed through military service, including reliability, strong health and safety awareness and the ability to work effectively as part of a team within structured, operational environments.

Roles at CWR provide structure, routine and clear expectations familiar to many Forces leavers, alongside opportunities to develop new skills and progress in long-term careers. This approach supports a successful transition from military service while enabling CWR to benefit from the discipline, adaptability and problem-solving capabilities that veterans bring to the workforce.

Reflecting on CWR's commitment to the Covenant, Forces leaver Mark Calland has shared: ***"Coming out of the Forces can be hard, but CWR eases you back into civilian life with its structured way of working and friendly culture. Opportunities to progress within the company are open to everyone, and you really feel supported when you join. I thoroughly enjoy working at CWR; I wouldn't swap it for the world."***

ARMED FORCES COVENANT

EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

GOLD AWARD

CWR's Armed Forces Covenant commitments help ensure that the skills, experience and values developed through military service continue to be applied within the local workforce.

By creating clear routes into employment for Forces leavers and Reservists, CWR is strengthening its own resilience while recognising the ongoing contribution of the Armed Forces community across the borough.

3 From Agency to Opportunity

CASE STUDY

Creating stable employment through workforce reform

In January 2024, CWR transitioned away from the use of agency labour, creating opportunities for people in temporary roles to move into stable, permanent employment. For employees, this shift has meant greater security, clearer pathways for progression and the ability to plan for the future.

Ryan McDonnell's experience reflects the impact of this change. After serving for 13 years in the Royal Signals, Ryan moved into civilian life working as an agency driver. While this provided short-term employment, agency work offered limited stability and fewer opportunities to progress.

Ryan initially joined CWR through this route but was offered a fixed-term contract as part of the transition away from agency working. Following a successful probation period, this progressed into a permanent role. In November 2024, Ryan stepped up into a Relief Supervisor position and has since moved into a permanent Supervisor role, drawing on his background in the Mechanical Transport Department in the Army, while developing a broader understanding of CWR's service delivery.

Reflecting on his CWR journey so far, Ryan has said: ***"I'm grateful for the opportunity CWR has given me to move into stable employment and away from the uncertainty of agency work. It has also given me clear opportunities to progress, and I know there is scope to continue developing my career here. In the longer term, I would like to work towards gaining my CPC Operator's Licence to support further progression within logistics and operations."***

For Ryan, moving into permanent employment has also enabled him to step on the property ladder. Professionally, he now values the structure, responsibility and people-focused nature of his role, and feels settled in a position that offers both stability and ongoing development.

Ryan's experience reflects a wider impact across the organisation. By moving away from agency working, CWR delivers tangible social value by creating secure employment, enabling career growth and supporting employees to build secure, independent lives. This approach aligns with the Borough's Six Missions, particularly those focused on inclusive economic growth, improving life chances and building stronger, more resilient communities.

4

From Local Partnership to Shared Growth

CASE STUDY

Strengthening the local supply chain

M&R Hydraulics is a locally-based Cheshire West and Chester business, established in 2001 and specialising in the service, repair and maintenance of hydraulic systems and components for plant, recycling and industrial equipment. For the past three years, the business has worked in partnership with CWR, providing specialist hydraulic support to help maintain the reliability of its frontline operations.

In turn, the partnership has supported M&R Hydraulics to strengthen its role within the local supply chain, building experience and capability within the recycling and waste sector. Working closely with CWR has reinforced the company's reputation for delivering dependable, responsive services in operational environments where reliability is critical, while supporting business continuity and effective planning.

The established working relationship allows M&R Hydraulics to support CWR across a range of hydraulic servicing and maintenance requirements, contributing to reliable service delivery and reduced operational disruption. As a locally-based supplier, the business is able to respond flexibly to operational needs, supporting efficient maintenance and asset reliability.

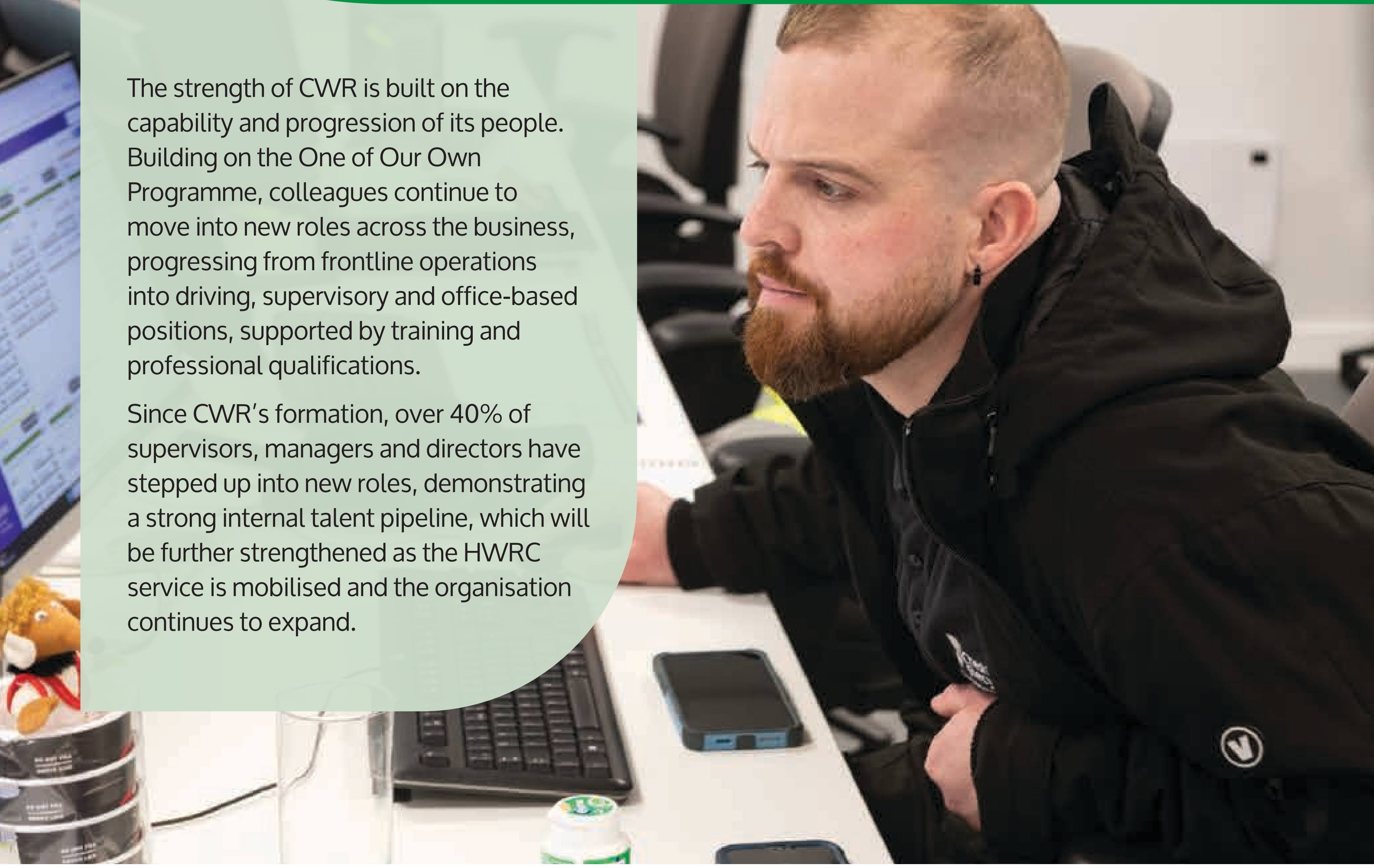
Reflecting on the partnership, Faye Garside, Business Development Manager at M&R Hydraulics, has said: ***"We greatly value our partnership with Cheshire West Recycling. The team has been easy to work with, and the relationship is built on trust and mutual respect. Working with CWR has allowed us to strengthen our position as a local supplier and to continue supporting the borough's economy."***

This partnership demonstrates how working with local suppliers can support resilient service delivery while strengthening the borough's economic landscape.

Cheshire West Recycling
Tomorrow **starts today**

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

M&R HYDRAULICS



The strength of CWR is built on the capability and progression of its people. Building on the One of Our Own Programme, colleagues continue to move into new roles across the business, progressing from frontline operations into driving, supervisory and office-based positions, supported by training and professional qualifications.

Since CWR's formation, over 40% of supervisors, managers and directors have stepped up into new roles, demonstrating a strong internal talent pipeline, which will be further strengthened as the HWRC service is mobilised and the organisation continues to expand.

People & Wellbeing Strategy (2025–2030)

Since its adoption in December 2024, the People and Wellbeing Strategy (2025–2030) has begun to shape CWR's culture and workforce priorities. Early progress includes increased visibility of the strategy across sites, a stronger focus on employee voice through engagement activity, and the start of preparations for the HWRC TUPE transfer in 2026. While implementation is at an early stage, the direction of travel is positive, and momentum is building fast.

Frontline Focus Group

The Frontline Focus Group continues to provide valuable insight from across the organisation, helping to shape improvements in communication, wellbeing and service delivery. Over the past year, colleagues have contributed to the development of the People and Wellbeing Strategy and offered practical suggestions on mental health support, supervisor communication and management visibility.

The focus group remains an important platform between employees and the Board, ensuring that frontline perspectives inform decision-making as CWR prepares for a significant year of operational change.

"The strength of CWR is built on the capability and progression of its people."

STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The following is a high-level summary of the key strategic business risks. These risks feed into our detailed operational risk framework, regularly monitored by the Board.

Area	Principle Risks	Description	Principle Contols / Risks
Health, Safety, Environment and Quality	Health and Safety of colleagues and the community	Incident occurs resulting in death or injury.	• Robust health and safety management system in place, externally audited to ISO 45001. • CMS accreditation ensures permit and wider HSEQ compliance. • Route Risk Assessments in place for all rounds to identify and mitigate hazards. • Comprehensive safety training Programme, HSE Reps and meetings in place.
	Maintaining legal and regulatory compliance	Scope for significant harm with the potential for cessation of all or part of business activities.	• Data driven compliance dashboards, reviewed at Director and Board level. • Clear business continuity plans established and approved by the Board. • CMS embedded with clear accountabilities established. • Legal & Compliance register maintained, reviewed and audited externally.
	Inadequacy of internal control systems	Established processes and systems not used correctly, resulting in an increased risk or operational inefficiency.	• Key policies and procedures embedded within ISO certified HSEQ Management systems. • Key business processes mapped and controlled; performance management measures implemented where not followed correctly. • Plan, Deliver, Review methodology ensures control of people and operations.
Operational	MRF operational performance and optimisation	MRF facility unable to meet operational assumptions.	• Plan, Deliver, Review methodology oversees and optimises operations. • AI analysers monitor plant performance with dashboards established to ensure production targets are met and any issues addressed. • Robust proactive and reactive maintenance arrangements in place.
	Incorrect service use / lack of service participation	Impacting upon quality of material collected.	• Robust processes to manage incorrect service usage in development with CWaC. • Service specification includes scope to take appropriate action when all engagement activities have been exhausted. • Clear contamination reporting, engagement and escalation processes established.

Area	Principle Risks	Description	Principle Contols / Risks
People	Adequate provision of labour due to challenges to retain / recruit	Shortages of labour in key operational and managerial roles.	• Annual alignment with Local Living Wage. • Active recruitment of ex-Armed Forces personnel and those from vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. • One of Our Own Programme drives progression at both frontline and managerial levels. • Improved frontline staff induction through buddying up, graduated inductions, Supervisor check ins, and smaller training groups for more personalised training, and support with a dedicated Resourcing Coordinator.
	Employee relations	Inflation levels and labour market conditions drive challenging pay and condition expectations.	• Proactive regular discussions with recognised Trade Unions. • Celebrate, challenge, change feedback mechanisms established and communicated via Employee Focus Group and digital screens. • Review potential impact of legislative changes within the Employment Act and stay abreast of implementation timetable.
	Health and Wellbeing	Cost of living continues to impact on personal financial pressures and employee wellbeing.	• People and Wellbeing Strategy in place. • Employee Assistance Programme in place and actively promoted. • Mental Health first aiders in place and regular signposting to specialist external support.
Finance & Governance	Cyber / Data Security	More complex and increased levels of cyber / data attacks.	• Financial penalties up to 4% of turnover (£600k+). • Reputational risk.
	HWRC	HWRC detailed budget to be completed and funding agreed.	• Significant materials income & disposal cost risk, specific to HWRCs. • Inherited sites – conditions not known. • Delivery dates of key plant, machinery and vehicles could be delayed and run over Go Live date.
	Impact of the recycling materials market	Significant market volatility with the difference between high and low price points over £3M.	• Ongoing engagement with CWaC to ensure effective management of service misuse. • Utilisation of expert broker who continues to deliver value for money. • Engagement with CWaC regarding stimulation of local end markets.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The following PESTEL and SWOT outlines the high-level external environment in which CWR is operating and a situational analysis of CWR's current position.

PESTEL

Political

- Continued challenges in relation to annual pay award expectations locally and at a national level.
- Continued global geopolitical uncertainties and unrest.
- Review regularly ongoing alignment to new Borough Plan for the Shareholder.
- Continued pressure on local funding, leaving the Shareholder needing to act in relation to any funding gap.
- Policy changes that will have a local, national and global impact.
- Accelerated pace of devolution discussions.

Economical

- Higher than forecast inflation continuing to impact on both the business and its employees.
- Potential increased employment costs due to legislative changes.
- Specialist skills shortages at both a direct and indirect staffing level.
- Protracted pressure on the UK economy; increased social care and health budget pressures further impacted by continuing global events.
- Cost implications of 'greening' and tightening environmental permitting compliance.

Social

- The ongoing cost of living crisis continues to place increasing financial pressure on both employees and residents.
- Continued public pressure for action in response to the climate emergency.
- Continued and escalating social care pressures affecting the Shareholder.
- Public perception challenges regarding the balance between public sector funding levels and the quality of services received.

Technology

- Social media increasingly influential at both local and national levels.
- The rapid rise of artificial intelligence presents both opportunities and challenges.
- Advances in robotics offer opportunities to enhance productivity and improve recycling, material recovery and quality.
- Data governance and questions around data ownership.
- Growing exposure to more sophisticated and complex cyber security threats.

Environmental

- Increasing public awareness surrounding environmental issues, although this does not always translate into action.
- Ambitious local, national and global targets have been set in relation to C02 emissions and the climate crisis.
- Global direction of travel with environmental target commitments; a drive for cleaner, quality traded materials placing pressure on reducing levels of contamination.

Legal

- Crystallising timetable of the rollout of the Environment Act legislative changes is starting to see significant adjustments being introduced on measures such as food waste / commercial collection, EPR and DRS industry commitments.
- Continued shift to UK centric legislation, replacing historic EU legislation.
- Changes in legislation or regulatory requirements.
- Agreement of formal contract documentation e.g. HWRCs, Fleet Management.

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Strengths

Long term security:
8 years+ contract awarded for household waste collection, fleet management and HWRC site management from 1st April 2026.

Data-driven principles:
Established and embedded practices, maximising efficiency and ensuring operational compliance.

Experienced workforce:
The "One of Our Own" initiative has fostered a skilled and talented team.

High-quality service:
Delivery of efficient, high-standard waste collection services.

Shareholder investment:
New fleet and facilities reduce risks of operational plant failure and support growth potential.

Award-winning provider:
Recognition for health and safety and service excellence with clear operational goals.

Strong board and senior management governance in place:
Supported through reserved matters and CWaC Board observers.

Social value impact:
Generating a very positive social value impact, contributing to the Council's Six Missions contained in the Borough Plan.

Comprehensive ISO Certification:
ISO certification and CMS accreditation across the business demonstrates a commitment to quality, environmental management and health and safety.

Enhanced relationship with Shareholder:
A strong level of trust and collaboration; the ability to make longer-term decisions; greater transparency and mutual support for providing excellent resident services whilst achieving efficiency savings through innovation.

The "One of Our Own" initiative has fostered a skilled and talented team.

ONE of our own

Weaknesses

Management capacity:
Would need to prioritise with the Shareholder any asks not included in the Business Plan, particularly during the mobilisation and integration of the HWRC sites.

Brand visibility:
Although improved, CWR brand recognition remains limited. This can potentially restrict growth opportunities.

Materials trading volatility:
No reserve in place to protect against a downturn in materials prices, which are volatile.

Speed of change:
Influenced by the Shareholder's timeline and governance structure, working with the Council to ensure efficient planning and execution of key projects.

SWOT

Opportunities

Planned sustainable deliverable growth:
Identify future sustainable deliverable growth opportunities where CWR can offer real value and efficiency savings in delivering and supporting Council or external services in present format or post devolution.

Capital investment optimisation:
Maximise the value of recent investments in fleet, MRF and workshops.

Community stewardship:
Broader engagement and leadership within the local community.

TECKAL status:
Enables external growth and diversification of services.

Transferable approach:
"Plan, Deliver, Review" model applicable to other Council or third-party organisations.

AI technology integration:
Further maximise the integration of AI technology to improve efficiency and performance, building on early implementations.

Commercial trade opportunities:
Potential to further expand commercial / school food waste collections in April 2026 when legislative changes are introduced.

Longer term strategy:
With the award of a longer-term contract for waste collection, fleet maintenance and HWRCs, this paves the way for longer-term financial management and strategy.

Economies of scale:
The addition of HWRC sites management increases the potential of gaining advantageous procurement terms and conditions, including social value impact when procuring future contracts.

Extending ISO certification and management systems to new HWRCs:
Expanding ISO certification and management systems to new HWRCs helps ensure consistent health and safety, quality and environmental standards across all operations.

Threats

Resident service usage:
Materials quality and value depends on correct resident usage, with limited CWR influence.

Economic challenges:
Long-term ongoing impacts of national and local economic conditions.

Recycling market volatility:
Unpredictable market dynamics affecting recycling profitability.

Legislative policy changes:
Legislative policy adjustments, impacting efficiencies and operations and may need capital investment.

Employment law changes:
Likely increased operational costs due to planned legislative changes.

HWRC mobilisation:
Finalising the TUPE transfer of the workforce remains a risk as final details not confirmed until 28 days before transfer date. Additionally, the contract start date commences over a double Bank Holiday – a traditionally busy period – posing additional operational challenges.

Procurement pipeline bottleneck:
Need to further develop procurement pipeline and factor in Procurement Act legislative changes.

Our 2026/27 Strategic Goals and Objectives

CWR will continue to work in close partnership with the Council, focusing on shared priorities that strengthen communities and deliver high-quality, sustainable services.
The following strategic goals will guide delivery during 2026/27:

Successful consolidation of HWRC operations

Complete and embed the transfer of HWRC management, ensuring safe, efficient and fully integrated operations, with a strong focus on staff engagement and consistently high service standards.

Maintain excellence in waste and fleet services

Further strengthen an established culture of continuous improvement through innovation, data-led decision-making and collaboration, delivering consistently high standards of quality, reliability and performance.

Continue to contribute to the Borough Plan

Support the Council's Six Missions through reliable core service delivery, responsible operational decisions, environmental stewardship and value for money, and contribute to resilient and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Further strengthen social value impact

Continue to embed social value within operational commercial decision-making, ensuring procurement, employment practices and service delivery generate added social, environmental and economic benefit.

Support progression and workforce stability

Enable progression from within by providing a supportive working environment, stable employment opportunities, clear development pathways and effective people management to attract and retain skilled people.

Maximise material quality and resource recovery

Strengthen resource recovery and material value by integrating technology, data insight and aligned MRF and HWRC operations, improving efficiency, overall value capture and readiness for legislative changes, such as the Deposit Return Scheme and plastic film collection.

Unlock sustainable growth opportunities

Identify and pursue sustainable growth opportunities that align with environmental goals; improve efficiency and deliver long-term value for the Council and external customers.

Build a future-ready fleet and infrastructure

Strengthen futureproofing of fleet and infrastructure to support net-zero ambitions, respond to regulatory changes and enable the transition to alternative fuels and technologies.

Maintain financial strength and resilience

Strengthen financial sustainability through robust cost control, active management of market volatility and appropriate reserves to mitigate fluctuations in recyclate markets.


THIS VEHICLE IS
EQUIPPED WITH CCTV
2630
Cheshire West
Recycling
Tomorrow starts today

Operational Objectives

Our objectives for 2026–27 are designed to build on our established service performance, while reinforcing CWR's commitment to operating in a safe, trusted, responsible and innovative way.

HSEQ

OBJECTIVES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	QUARTER
Mobilise HWRC sites into the CWR HSEQ framework, with a phased transition to CMS.	HWRC sites are mobilised under the CWR HSEQ framework from Go Live, with interim controls, safe working procedures and risk assessments in place and a planned transition to full CMS coverage by the end of Q3.	Q4
Embed the new HSEQ management and training system across CWR operations.	The HSEQ management and training system is implemented and embedded as business as usual, providing consistent competence management, improved visibility of training compliance, and strengthened assurance across all operational areas.	Q2
Strengthen safety culture and reduce high risk activities through prevention, supervision and learning.	Safety culture is strengthened through effective engagement, supervision and learning, with high-risk activities better controlled through preventative measures, improved reporting quality and effective investigation and feedback.	Q4
Manage environmental permits and regulatory change, including delivery of required upgrade works.	Environmental permits are actively managed to ensure ongoing compliance with legal and regulatory change, including EPR and Simpler Recycling requirements, with required upgrade works identified, approved and delivered in a controlled manner.	Q3

OPERATIONS

OBJECTIVES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	QUARTER
Mobilise and consolidate HWRC operations while maintaining core service excellence.	HWRC operations are transferred, embedded and operating safely and effectively, with services fully integrated into CWR, and core waste collection and fleet performance maintained throughout mobilisation.	Q4
Deliver EPR funded MRF upgrades aligned to Simpler Recycling and regulatory requirements.	MRF upgrades are agreed, delivered and introduced in a controlled manner, ensuring continued compliance with EPR and Simpler Recycling requirements without compromising operational performance or safety.	Q4
Improve material quality and value across collections, HWRCs and the MRF.	Material quality is improved across the system through targeted, data-led interventions, resulting in reduced contamination, stronger output quality and improved value capture.	Q4
Maximise operational efficiency through integration of HWRC operations into CWR.	HWRC operations are fully integrated into CWR's operating model, enabling more efficient use of shared resources, improved planning and delivery, and greater operational resilience.	Q4
Deliver a resilient, future-ready Fleet Service under the new long-term contract.	Fleet Services are delivered in line with the new long-term contract, providing a reliable, compliant and future-ready fleet that supports service performance, regulatory change and the transition to alternative fuels and technologies.	Q4

PEOPLE

OBJECTIVES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	QUARTER
HWRC - TUPE transfer and onboarding support.	Support smooth TUPE transfer of employees and resolve any onboarding issues encountered.	Q4
Review CWR's pay and reward framework.	Complete full review, considering best practice and legislation, develop a journey map for Board consideration.	Q4
Further review CWR's people-related policies.	Ensure policies remain relevant, reflect any legislative changes occurred since last review, and contribute to our commitment to be an Employer of Choice.	Q4
Continue to build on retention rates by 5% through delivering principles in support of our commitment to be an Employer of Choice.	Continue to explore ways of improving onboarding process, particularly for frontline staff. Ensure reward and recognition packages remain competitive. Continue to offer career pathways and progression opportunities.	Q4

FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	QUARTER
HWRC financials.	Deliver the HWRC service within the operational cost budget.	Q4
Materials price variance sharing mechanism.	Investigate implementation of a price variance sharing mechanism with the Shareholder for 2026/27.	Q3
Further embed segmental reporting & devolved budget responsibility.	Detailed profit & loss analysis at segmental level – reviewed with relevant Manager quarterly.	Q4
Model & assess the impacts of the upcoming Deposit Return Scheme & Simpler Recycling regulations.	Detailed analysis made and shared with Shareholder.	Q3

CHANGE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

OBJECTIVES	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	QUARTER
Embed HWRC systems and processes within CWR's operating model to deliver a safe, efficient and transparent service.	Paper-based processes are digitised, SOPs are standardised and dashboards are implemented to provide insight into HWRC service activity and performance.	Q3
Develop an improved reuse approach at HWRCs to maximise waste prevention.	Complete a structured options appraisal, with a preferred reuse model identified that maximises reuse, social value and service efficiency, and is integrated with the bulky waste collection service.	Q4
Deliver programmed service change and improvement projects in partnership with the Council.	Service provision for communal and city centre properties complies with Simpler Recycling; contamination is reduced across all waste streams; and plastic film trials delivered to inform future service design.	Q4
Deliver a schools focused waste education programme, supported by wider resident communications and engagement.	Increased awareness of correct waste use among pupils and households; improved material quality and increased participation in food waste services, with messages consistently reinforced through resident communications.	Q3
Ensure core business systems are secure, integrated, ready to support regulatory change and operational growth.	Systems and processes are ready for mandatory digital waste tracking; Cyber Essentials is achieved with a pathway to ISO 27001 established; enhanced threat monitoring is in place and system integration reduces manual reporting and improves operational insight.	Q3

Growth Plan
2027/28 – 2030/31

This forward growth plan sets out Cheshire West Recycling's strategic direction beyond the current business plan period. It provides a high level framework to guide our focus over the coming years, ensuring we remain structured in our overall approach while also agile and responsive to the needs of both our Shareholder and the business. It reflects our ability to adapt to changing priorities and opportunities in a rapidly evolving environment whilst always endeavouring to provide value and mitigate any adverse financial impacts on our Shareholder.

The plan outlines how CWR will continue to focus on its core purpose: delivering high quality service performance, strengthening operational resilience and working in close partnership with the Council to unlock sustainable growth that delivers long term value.

Driven by the Company Board and Shareholder, this approach is firmly aligned with the Council's Borough Plan, supporting delivery of its social and environmental ambitions. It reflects a shared commitment to high quality, value for money services and follows a phased and disciplined approach to growth.

We will support the Council in navigating an evolving policy and legislative landscape, including national waste reform, devolution and wider regulatory changes such as employment law and public service standards. At the same time, we will pursue opportunities that strengthen our business, enhance service outcomes and deliver long term environmental, social and financial value. All proposals will be supported by robust, evidence based business cases broadly in line with HM Treasury Green Book principles.

This framework will guide strategic decisions and investment planning, with detailed delivery plans developed each year through the business planning process.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Year 1 (2027/8)

Focused growth and strategic delivery

Year one of this growth plan will deliver targeted growth through the optimisation of core services and the development of existing offers. Following the mobilisation of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) and the implementation of associated policy changes, the focus now shifts to improving efficiency, embedding flexibility and maximising the value of the new operating model.

A key growth area during this period will be the expansion of our reuse offer. We will bring together HWRC and kerbside bulky waste collections into a single, integrated service, creating a more coordinated and visible reuse model. This will increase material recovery, reduce waste and deliver wider social and environmental value.

We will also pursue measured growth in our Fleet Services and commercial waste activities, identifying opportunities that enhance operational resilience and deliver clear value whilst not impacting our core service to the Council. Continued investment in these areas will improve asset utilisation, support whole-life cost savings and increase CWR's capacity to respond to evolving service needs.

Workforce flexibility and capability will be a key enabler. We will invest in our expanded workforce and deploy people and resources more effectively across the business. This supports a more resilient, efficient and adaptable service model.

This is a year of focused delivery that strengthens our foundations for future growth. It ensures we remain agile in responding to national policy change and the evolving devolution agenda, while maintaining the stability needed to deliver high quality services.

Strategic Growth Through Partnership (2028/29 to 2030/31)

A partnership-driven approach

From 2028/29 onwards, CWR will work closely with the Council to identify and deliver growth opportunities that support service excellence, environmental goals and long-term community value. This includes responding to national policy reform and proactively engaging with the implications and opportunities presented by devolution.

As new models of local service delivery emerge, CWR will play an active role in supporting the Council's One Council approach. This means contributing to more joined up public services, improved outcomes for residents and effective use of resources.

All proposals will be considered on a case-by-case basis, ensuring alignment with Council priorities, proportionality of risk and clear evidence of social, environmental and financial value.

Unlocking Future Opportunities

Potential areas for development include:

- Enhanced material recovery and income solutions, improving recyclate quality, operational performance and income stability by exploring partnership opportunities arising from devolution.
- Circular economy partnerships that reduce waste and support community-led sustainability.
- Selective commercial or third-party services where surplus capacity exists and Council interests are protected.
- Further development of fleet, infrastructure and technical services to support the Council and wider Borough's net zero ambitions.
- Service innovation aligned with national reform, devolution led priorities and emerging local government delivery models.

All opportunities will be subject to rigorous appraisal broadly in line with HM Treasury Green Book principles.

Future Ready Investment

CWR will continue to invest in existing fleet and infrastructure to meet future operational, regulatory and environmental requirements. Longer term investment decisions will be made collaboratively with the Council based on whole life cost, service resilience and technological readiness, supporting long-term net zero goals.

Financial Resilience

Growth will be carefully paced to protect core service delivery and maintain financial strength. This will be underpinned by disciplined cost control, active management of market volatility, particularly in recyclate markets, and the maintenance of appropriate reserves.

In Summary

This four-year growth plan sets out a measured and responsible approach to maintaining high quality waste and recycling services while enabling sustainable, partnership-led growth. By prioritising service excellence, workforce stability and operational resilience in the early stages, CWR will create the conditions for future development. From 2028/29, growth will be explored collaboratively with the Council, with a focus on shared priorities, environmental goals and supporting the wider ambitions of local government.

Cheshire West Recycling
Tomorrow **starts today**

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CW7 3PD

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Vat Reg No: 341156822

LRQA CERTIFIED
COMPETENCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

ISOQAR REGISTERED
UKAS MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS 0026
Cert No 19022
ISO 14001, ISO 45001, ISO 9001